



Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs

John E. Doerr

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Legendary venture capitalist John Doerr reveals how the goal-setting system of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) has helped tech giants from Intel to Google achieve explosive growth--and how it can help any organization thrive.

In the fall of 1999, John Doerr met with the founders of a start-up whom he'd just given \$12.5 million, the biggest investment of his career. Larry Page and Sergey Brin had amazing technology, entrepreneurial energy, and sky-high ambitions, but no real business plan. For Google to change the world (or even to survive), Page and Brin had to learn how to make tough choices on priorities while keeping their team on track. They'd have to know when to pull the plug on losing propositions, to fail fast. And they needed timely, relevant data to track their progress -- to measure what mattered.

Doerr taught them about a proven approach to operating excellence: Objectives and Key Results. He had first discovered OKRs in the 1970s as an engineer at Intel, where the legendary Andy Grove ("the greatest manager of his or any era") drove the best-run company Doerr had ever seen. Later, as a venture capitalist, Doerr shared Grove's brainchild with more than fifty companies. Wherever the process was faithfully practiced, it worked.

In this goal-setting system, objectives define what we seek to achieve; key results are how those top-priority goals will be attained with specific, measurable actions within a set time frame. Everyone's goals, from entry level to CEO, are transparent to the entire organization.

The benefits are profound. OKRs surface an organization's most important work. They focus effort and foster coordination. They keep employees on track. They link objectives across silos to unify and strengthen the entire company. Along the way, OKRs enhance workplace satisfaction and boost retention.

In *Measure What Matters*, Doerr shares a broad range of first-person, behind-the-scenes case studies, with narrators including Bono and Bill Gates, to demonstrate the focus, agility, and explosive growth that OKRs have spurred at so many great organizations. This book will help a new generation of leaders capture the same magic.

Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs Details

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Romans Karpelcevs says

Did I learn how to set OKRs? No.

Did I find out what's the difference between Os and KRs when you choose them? No.

Do I know how to align departments with non-trivial objectives? No.

Did I understand what to do when things go wrong? No.

Do I feel confident about doing OKRs now? No.

Am I inspired about OKRs more than I was when I started the book? No.

Did I at least heard about how to measure what matters? No.

Did I learn anything at all from this book?! Hm... I heard empty case studies where people, mostly Silicon Valley superstars, and sometimes just ex-Googlers share their fascination with OKRs. Then again, I mostly heard pitching of their latest or even old companies and achievements and how "they wouldn't have done it without OKRs". I guess what I've understood for myself is if so many people actually believe in it, I shouldn't give up on OKRs just because of this book.

This book should have the title "OKR Cargo Cult: How to Create One". I'm sure there's more to the framework, just don't try to see it in this book. It's an endless stream of selling the 3 golden letters, without an attempt of sharing anything below the surface.

Also, 4+ rating for this empty book? Is it really because John Doerr managed to get many cool people to contribute? Gah. 4 stars doesn't mean anything even in non-fiction now.

Martin Brochhaus says

This book is bad.

The first 18% of the book is simply silicon valley hero worshipping, basically the author bragging about all the cool people he has worked with and why they are so important and genius and surely everything that follows must be of importance because he has worked with important people.

This book is nothing more than a bunch of case studies. As always with these case studies, they are extremely specific to the companies under observation and you will not learn anything from this that you can repeat in your own company.

Most importantly, the book fails to provide any proof that OKRs were what actually drove the companies to success. These were all companies that were faced with some existential threat and therefore the management decided what is the most important new metric and then made everyone work long hours in order to meet that metric. You can achieve that with any management technique.

Furthermore, there is not a single chapter that defines in detail what OKRs are, how they are implemented in a company, what software should be used to guide the implementation, what should be done when someone fails their objectives, and so on and so forth. Instead, in each case study you will find one orange box that shows a sample OKR that was presumably taken from that company at the time. I assume these are all bullshit and made up by the author, but even if not, they are so glaringly obvious, and simple, you don't need to be a manager or expert to make them up. These can't be what drove those companies to success, no way, the secret sauce lies somewhere else and is not revealed in this book.

By the way, if you are in the tough spot of trying to find that magic thing that matters the most for your business to measure, don't read this book - despite the clickbait title - this book isn't about that. Sure you can

use OKRs to measure things and be transparent about it - but WHAT TO MEASURE is still up to you to figure out.

As far as I can tell, the entire OKR idea fits on one DIN A4 page, so I would say, this book isn't at all about how to use OKRs, instead it is to celebrate a few lucky silicon valley success stories.

And granted: that alone can be quite inspiring. I will try to implement this in my own companies, but I'll need some other reading material to succeed with that. This book is merely here to kindle the flame.

Keith Martin says

Solid methodology that could be adequately summarized in two pages, padded to 300+ pages with self-aggrandizement and surface-level case studies.

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From reader reviews:

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Mary Redus:

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John Negron:

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